

USER REPORT

FLAI Type U Saw Blade

by Stan Ceglinski

Here at the Billinudgel Wood Working Company on the NSW Mid North Coast we had need of a saw blade that would rip and cross-cut and leave a glass-like finish. At least that was the hype for the Italian made FLAI U Blade.

Having any blade perform both rip and cross-cut is a big ask. Typically it's a compromise with the resulting cut not being quite as good as a dedicated rip or cross-cut blade.

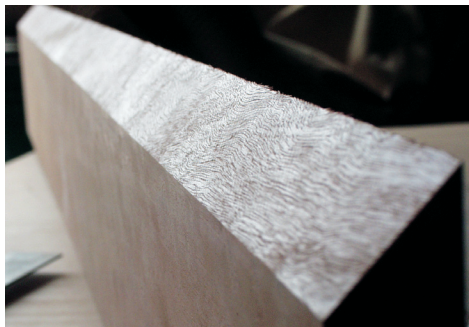


Photo.2: The mitre cut straight off the blade

Photo.3: The job required 1200mm long lengths of Forest Red Gum mitre cut to form angle section frames



In any case we needed a new blade for our Wadkin Panelmaster so we contacted Promac and organised delivery of a U Blade of the required size.

When the blade arrived we were about to start on a commission piece made from Forest Red Gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*). If you've ever worked with this species, you will know how hard and tough it is to machine.

To make matters worse, this particular 1300mm dia. log came from a larger section that I had cut at the Brisbane Working with Wood Show about five years ago as a sawmilling demonstration. It had fairly wild grain heading all over the place. The concern was that if the blade was not up to the task, it would wander, taking the easier path through the softer grain, and creating variation in the cut.

We needed to make crisp accurate 45° cuts to 1200mm lengths (Photo.2) to provide mitred boards that assemble into angle section frames (Photo.3) for the project.

My apprentice installed the blade and he made the trial cut. I was so impressed with the results that I allowed him to continue.

The blade is about 0.5mm thicker than previous blades I have used and is much stiffer. It has alternating bevel teeth with a micro grade carbide tungsten tip. The manufacturer claims that the design enables the blade to make cuts that are ready to glue with no further preparation.

After the apprentice had made the cuts, we inspected all of the components. The cut faces were indeed flawless. They had a glassy finish with a crisp razor-like edge. We put them together, checked with a square and found that they formed a perfect right angle.

Since that day we have used the blade on Ironbarks, Spotted Gum and Stringybarks as well as softer timbers such as Blackbutt and Jarrah and even softer species like Cedar and Camphor. Our Panelmaster does quite a large cut and we use it like a sawmill regularly.

The FLAI U Blade is excellent for doing work where the

finished cut is 'the finished surface' and needs to be as smooth as possible. On curly timbers we found the finish on the cuts to be better by far

than that off the thicknesser.

The blade cuts very accurately and is very quiet in operation.

We used the blade for months before we had to have it re-sharpened.

The blade itself is a bit disconcerting to look at. It doesn't appear to have enough teeth to give a fine finish. However, the European technology works and in our experience the blade performs as well as they claim.

For more information on the FLAI blade range, contact Promac, Ph: 1800 773 267 or visit www.promac.com.au.

Billinudgel Wood Working Company can be contacted on Ph: 02 6680 4455, Fax: 02 6680 4456 or visit www.billinudgel-woodworks.com.au



Photo.1: The FLAI U Blade

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